



POEPHILA ACUTICAUDA: Gould

J. Gould and H.C. Richter del.^{tr}

C. Hullmandel imp.

POËPHILA ACUTICAUDA, *Gould.*

Long-tailed Grass Finch.

Amadina acuticauda, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VII. p. 143.

It is no less interesting to trace the analogies of species inhabiting the opposite portions of a large continent like that of Australia, than to observe how beautifully any peculiar character is preserved in the species of every natural group. The three new species of the present genus afford a very striking example of this, where not only a similarity of colouring exists in the deep fawn or cinnamon hue of the plumage, but in the conspicuous band of black which surrounds the lower part of the body; nor is the graduated character of the tail-feathers less striking in these three species, the first trace of it being observable in *Poëphila cincta*, which would appear to be carried to the maximum in the present species, which, so far as is known, is confined to the north-west coast. The specimens from which my figures of this bird were taken are from the interesting collection placed in my hands by Mr. Bynoe of the Beagle, whose great perseverance and assiduity have enabled me to add many species to the fauna of Australia. Indeed many of the officers of that vessel will have their names handed down to posterity in consequence of the attention they have paid to this branch of science, independently of the legitimate objects of their various expeditions; among others I may particularly allude to my much-esteemed friend Mr. Darwin, Captain Wickham, Captain Stokes, Mr. Dring, &c. Since the arrival of Mr. Bynoe's birds I have also received specimens from Port Essington, which, like their analogue the *Poëphila cincta* of the eastern coast, inhabit the open plains bordering streams, and feed on the seeds of various grasses and other plants.

I regret that so little information has been transmitted to me respecting the habits and economy of this beautiful species.

The sexes differ but little in outward appearance; the female is, however, rather less in size, is less strikingly marked, and has the two middle tail-feathers shorter than her mate.

Crown of the head and cheeks grey; upper and under surface of the body fawn-colour, becoming more delicate, and assuming a pinky hue on the abdomen; lores, throat, band across the rump and tail jet-black; upper and under tail-coverts and thighs white; wings fawn-grey; bill and feet yellow.

The figures are those of a male and a female of the natural size.